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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
Office of Marketing Services
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BRIEF SUMMARY OF STANDARDS, DEFINITIONS, AND OTHER PROVISIONS
FOR IMPROVING FOOD QUALITY 1/

Introduction

For a number of years, there has been a growing interest in fortification and enrichment of certain common foods to improve food quality in terms of their nutritive value. Many papers were published on this subject in the late thirties and they had a considerable influence in arousing public opinion along this line. The scope and direction of this current program have been influenced in large measure by the recommendations and resolutions of the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council^{2/} and Council on Foods and Nutrition of the American Medical Association. Various voluntary organizations, especially State and local nutrition committees, have also interested themselves in programs pointed toward this end. Some of these have urged that Federal and State standards be established and legislation enacted; others have stressed nutrition education in order to stimulate public interest in selecting available foods most conducive to optimum health. Although for some products both of these approaches have been used, nutritional improvement of certain other products has been on a voluntary basis only. In some cases, when it appeared that the fortification or enrichment of a specific product would be desirable, Federal standards have been considered or established.

Federal Standards

The Food and Drug Administration has announced a number of food definitions and standards that have been established under the authority of the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act of 1938. Two facts not generally understood about these Federal standards are: First, that these standards apply only to foods shipped in interstate commerce; and, second, that establishment of a definition and standard of identity for a food does not require a food processor to produce that food exclusively. Although conformity with Federal standards is not required when food products are distributed and sold solely within State lines, it is fairly common practice for food processors to follow the Federal standards when producing the enriched and vitamin-fortified foods for which Federal standards have been set, regardless of the area of distribution.

1/ Prepared by the Nutrition Programs Branch and the Civilian Food Requirements Branch, Office of Marketing Services, at the suggestion of the Nutrition Planning Committee, for representatives of nutrition committees and of any group or agency interested in furthering improvement of food quality.

2/ Important detailed references are:

- (a) "Facts About Enrichment of Flour and Bread," Food and Nutrition Board, National Research Council, Washington, D.C. October 1944.
- (b) "Enrichment of Flour and Bread," by Russell M. Wilder and Robert R. Williams, Food and Nutrition Board, National Research Council, Washington, D.C. November 1944.

In regard to the second point, it must be understood that when a Federal standard has been established for an enriched food, a standard has been set also for the same kind of food without the addition of vitamins and minerals. If a food processor elects to distribute and offer for sale any enriched or vitamin-fortified food for which a standard has been established, the product must conform with the standard in respect to kind and amounts of added ingredients and with the labeling requirements respecting declaration of vitamin and mineral content. If at the same time the food producer chooses to offer for sale the unenriched product, without adding the ingredients required for enrichment, he may continue to do so provided his product is properly labeled.

Standards for a Few of the Common Foods

Several standards contained in Federal orders and State laws respecting enrichment and fortification of food have been established since 1941. The Federal standards relating to vitamin content were set first for evaporated milk, then for oleomargarine, and later for enriched flour and enriched farina. No Federal standard has been established for enriched bread, although a standard was proposed in August 1943 and provided incentive to State legislation. Degerminated corn meal and grits - staple in the South - have received consideration in State laws but no Federal standard has been established. Table 1 on page 4 shows the effective dates of Federal standards and of State laws.

Evaporated Milk. Fortification of milk with vitamin D was advocated by the Council on Foods and Nutrition of the American Medical Association as early as 1939; however, the Federal definition and standard of identity for evaporated milk were not established until March 1, 1941. Evaporated milk so fortified is widely distributed and is available practically everywhere.

Oleomargarine. The Food and Drug Administration established a definition and standard of identity for oleomargarine, effective September 5, 1941. According to this definition, oleomargarine may be fortified with vitamins A and D. Six States (Tennessee, South Carolina, Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, and Mississippi) have passed laws which require fortification with vitamin A.

Flour and Bread. Enrichment of flour and bread has interested millers and bakers as well as nutritionists for some time and was begun on a large scale in February 1941. A Federal standard for enriched flour was established on January 1, 1942. Proposed definitions and standards of identity of various kinds of bread were issued July 29, 1943, but these have not been made official.

The War Food Administration's first order included a requirement that all white bread should be enriched, as a war emergency measure. This order became effective January 18, 1943, and was amended May 1, 1944, to include rolls.

Six States, namely, South Carolina, Alabama, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Kentucky, have passed laws requiring the enrichment of all white flour and white bread sold within their borders. The acts passed by the first four States are currently effective; the Mississippi law is scheduled to become effective February 1, 1945; the Kentucky law will become effective 6 months after the end

of the war.^{3/} Except in these States, enrichment of both bread and flour after the war will depend wholly on the voluntary support of millers and bakers - unless further mandatory legislative action is taken.

Farina. A Federal standard for enriched farina became effective on the same date as the standard for enriched flour.

Corn Meal and Grits. Three States, South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi, have passed laws requiring the enrichment of degermed corn meal and grits. The effective date for this legislation will be February 1, 1945, for all three States. The Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council proposed certain advisory standards which serve as the principal guide for enrichment of corn products. No hearings have been called to fix Federal standards for these products.

Voluntary Programs

A few products or foods have been enriched or fortified wholly on a voluntary basis.

Iodized Salt. A few States have educational programs for the general widespread use of iodized salt, particularly in those areas of the United States where goiter is a recognized mass affliction. Since about half of the table salt is iodized at present, an intensive educational program is recommended so that consumers may understand why it is important to ask for iodized salt to aid in the eradication of goiter due to iodine deficiency.

Cereal Breakfast Foods. Fortification of many breakfast foods made from refined cereals has become a fairly common practice. Such fortified foods are now available in most markets.

Rice. Nutritionists have interested themselves in the improvement of the nutritive value of white rice. Brown and unpolished rice are produced to some extent. "Converted rice," which retains much of the natural vitamin and mineral content, is being produced in limited quantities.

Educational Programs

Where food standards have been established, a certain amount of educational effort has been an essential need so that new consumers can understand the reasons for the standards and why it is to their interest to ask for the improved products when making their purchases.

^{3/} According to Russell M. Wilder and Robert R. Williams, "Enrichment of Flour and Bread," page 62, all the States in the South are now working toward enrichment legislation and approximately half the States outside the South are considering such legislation.

Table 1. Effective dates of Federal orders and State laws respecting enrichment and fortification of foods.^{1/}

Orders and laws	Evapo-rated milk	Oleo-margar-ine	Enriched flour	Enriched farina	Enriched bread	Degermi-nated corn meal & grits
Federal standards adopted under Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act	3-1-41	9-5-41	1-1-42 Amended 10-1-43	1-1-42	Proposed 7-29-43 (not final)	None
War Food Order	None	None	None	None	1-18-43 Amended 5-1-44	None
Tennessee Acts	None	2-15-41	None	None	None	None
South Carolina Acts	None	7-1-42	8-1-42	None	8-1-42	2-1-45
Louisiana Acts	None	10-1-42	10-1-42	None	10-1-42	None
Alabama Acts	None	10-1-43	10-1-43	None	10-1-43	2-1-45
Texas Acts	None	8-9-43	4-30-43	None	4-30-43	None
Mississippi Acts	None	2-1-45	2-1-45	None	2-1-45	2-1-45
Kentucky Acts	None	None	6 months after war emergency	None	6 months after war emergency	None

^{1/}Adapted from table included in "A Digest of Federal and State Laws and Regulations Pertaining to Food Enrichment or Fortification", an unpublished paper by R. C. Sherwood, Office of Marketing Services, War Food Administration, Washington, D.C. 1944.